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ABSTRACT

Multimedia hypertext materials have instructional advantages when used as adjuncts in traditional classes and as the primary means of instruction, as illustrated in this case study of college-level Shakespeare classes. Plays become more accessible through use of audio and video resources, including video clips from play productions. Student work can be included as models, and updating or expansion of texts is as easy as changing HTML files. With over 40 hours of instruction per play module, assignments can be individualized to student needs and used repeatedly--for instruction, clarification, make-up on missed classes, or review for exams. Materials for each play include three lectures and seven topics for exploration (issues, character, plotting, genre, critics, staging, and background); instructional aids on cast, story line, literary terms, and references, as well as access to a searchable text of Shakespeare's works, are included. Results over 5 years of development and revision are reported. Topics discussed include: structure of the Shakespeare Hypertext Guides (SHGs); pedagogical advantages of hypertextual instructional materials; and the development process from theory to prototype to evaluation to revision. One figure illustrates a sample page of the SHG, and a table presents data on the logistics and evaluation of Shakespeare courses using SHGs. (Author/DLS)

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Teaching Shakespeare: Materials and Outcomes for Web-based Instruction and Class Adjunct

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Abstract: Multi-media hypertext materials have instructional advantages when used as adjuncts in traditional classes and as the primary means of instruction, as illustrated in this case study of college level Shakespeare classes. Plays become more accessible through use of audio and video resources, including video clips from play productions. Student work can be included as models, and updating or expansion of texts is as easy as changing html files. With over 40 hours of instruction per play module, assignments can be individualized to student needs and used repeatedly--for instruction, clarification, make-up on missed classes or review for exams. Materials for each play include three lectures and seven topics for exploration (Issues, Character, Plotting, Genre, Critics, Staging and Background); instructional aids on cast, story-line, literary terms, and references, as well as access to a searchable text of Shakespeare's works, are included. Results over five years of development and revision are reported.

How can hypertext help teach an academic subject such as Shakespeare's plays? Can a class be taught completely on the Web or should Web materials simply serve as adjuncts to class-room presentations and homework sessions? Over the past five years I've experimented with the interface of hypertexts to teach nine Shakespearean plays (including sound, pictures and video clips as well as text in the instructional material) and have modified the ways these hypertexts were used in face-to-face classes and in Web-based courses. This paper reports on the philosophy and pedagogy underlying the design of materials as well as the results.

At first, the Shakespeare Hypertext Guides (SHG) were used as resources for classroom presentation and for student use in making up missed classes, reviewing students' knowledge of plays and supplementing classroom instruction. After using the SHGs in three face-to-face classes, I initiated a hypertext-based course in Fall 1995. Initially the hypertexts were HyperCard stacks with delivery of course assignments through the campus network and email. In Fall 1996, four of the seven plays were delivered on the World Wide Web, again with email as an adjunct. In Spring 1998, an upper-level version of the course was offered that is completely Web-based, including the delivery of student work to the instructor, the posting on a class bulletin board and posting of grades (with the course management presented through WebCT, a Web-based teaching environment developed at the University of British Columbia: http://homebrew.cs.ubc.ca/webct/.

Structure

The Web-based SHGs call for student response while providing guidance and learning aids in the form of texts, sound clips of speeches, relevant pictures and comparative video clips. Each play has its own Web site. Each play provides instruction with

- "Lectures" (usually three per play) that provide a coherent interpretation of the play while suggesting alternate interpretations
- "Explorations": seven per play on Issues of Interpretation, Characterization, Plotting, Genre, Critics, Staging and Background (use of sources and textual variation). These Explorations provide material to help students with more open-ended questions. They also contain samples of student response, whenever such work is available.

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Each "Lecture" or "Exploration" segment has a form by which the student can send a response to the instructor. It is the instructor's job to select how many or which forms will be required and at what pace. For example, in Spring 1998 I required on-line students to respond to one "Lecture" and one "Exploration" of their choice, as well as working on a group-paper in response to another Lecture. But after the first exam I recommended which "Exploration" is recommended for a particular student based on their exam results--with the Explorations on Genre, Critics, Staging and Background usually suggested only for students who have earned at least a B on the essays and identification of quotations on the exam. In Fall 1998, with a different instructor, on-line students will generally respond to a Lecture or Exploration of their choice, work on a group-paper and fill out a more factually oriented short-answer form. (An additional paper requiring use of critical sources is also required, but independent of the course materials described in this paper.)

Additional aids to instruction (as shown in Figure 1) are given in the header for each Lecture or Exploration. A student can review a scene-by-scene summary of the play, an interactive graphic of the cast of characters, a glossary, references to secondary sources or Shakespeare's playtext (with the opportunity to search or copy the text at MIT's Shakespeare Web site at http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html).

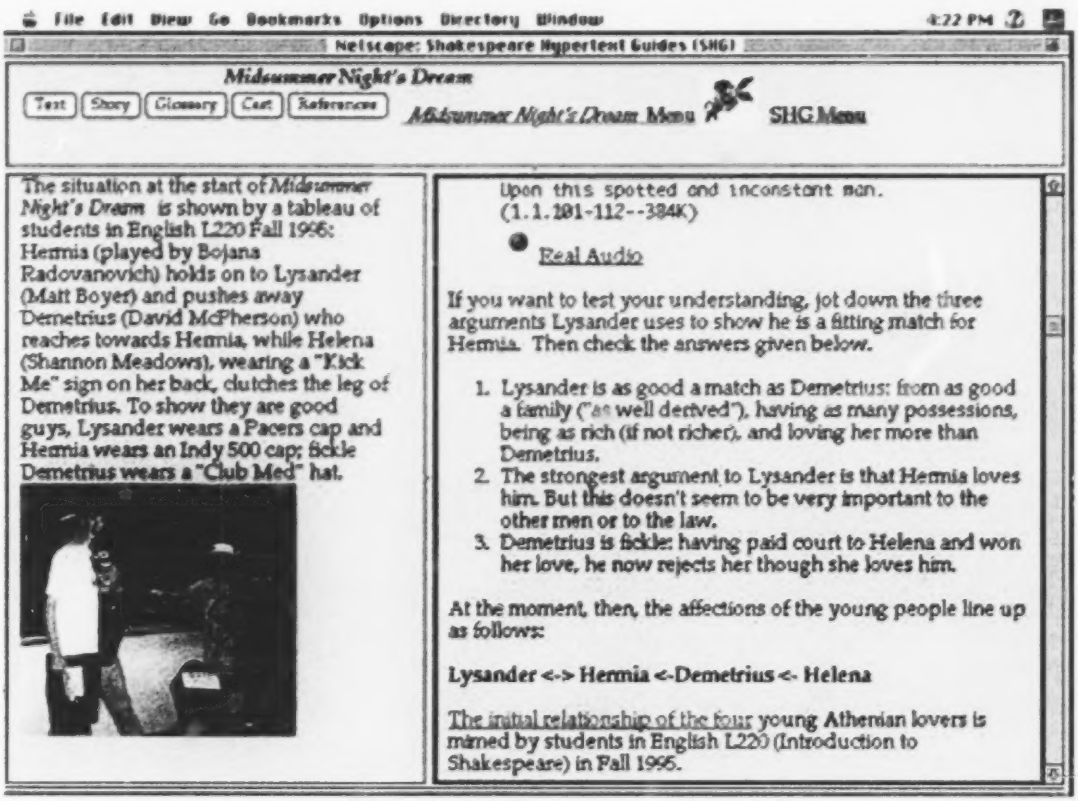
File Edit View Go Bookmarks Options Directory Window
4:22 PM
Netscape: Shakespeare Hypertext Guides (SHG)
Midsummer Night's Dream
Text
Story
Glossary
Cast
References
Midsummer Night's Dream Menu
SHG Menu
The situation at the start of Midsummer Night's Dream is shown by a tableau of students in English L220 Fall 1996: Hermia (played by Bojana Radovanovich) holds on to Lysander (Matt Boyer) and pushes away Demetrius (David McPherson) who reaches towards Hermia, while Helena (Shannon Meadows), wearing a "Kick Me" sign on her back, clutches the leg of Demetrius. To show they are good guys, Lysander wears a Pacers cap and Hermia wears an Indy 500 cap; fickle Demetrius wears a "Club Med" hat.
upon this spotted and inconstant man.
(1.1.101-112--384K)
Real Audio
If you want to test your understanding, jot down the three arguments Lysander uses to show he is a fitting match for Hermia. Then check the answers given below.
1. Lysander is as good a match as Demetrius: from as good a family ("as well derived"), having as many possessions, being as rich (if not richer), and loving her more than Demetrius.
2. The strongest argument to Lysander is that Hermia loves him. But this doesn't seem to be very important to the other men or to the law.
3. Demetrius is fickle: having paid court to Helena and won her love, he now rejects her though she loves him.
At the moment, then, the affections of the young people line up as follows:
Lysander <-> Hermia <-Demetrius <- Helena
The initial relationship of the four young Athenian lovers is mimed by students in English L220 (Introduction to Shakespeare) in Fall 1996.

Figure 1: Sample page for Web-based instructional delivery on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Advantages:

Hypertextual instructional materials provide several important pedagogical advantages:

1) Hypertexts use audio and video resources that make Shakespearean drama more "accessible" to students.

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2) Students see different versions of actual productions juxtaposed to show the range of interpretation possible and the necessity to explain quotations.
3) Student work can be included in the stacks as samples and videos of scene production.
4) In individual sessions, students control the pace of their learning, with the ability to print most text resources, to answer questions in one or several sittings.
5) The range of topics (with over 40 hours of instruction possible per play) allows supplemental activities geared to individual learning needs (on the basis of an early diagnostic exam) and allows inclusion of challenging materials (such as discussion of historical adaptations or textual variants) that are not normally covered in class.
6) Frequent writing supports learning when students process what they are learning in a mode in addition to reading and listening.

Advantages for the logistics of teaching in various contexts are:

7) The random-access of hypertext makes it easy for teachers to have flexible control of audio and video resources without excessive equipment.
8) Coordination of the syllabus with hypertextual activities allows commuter students to make up missed class sessions and keeps students responsible for their learning, despite missed classes.
9) The teacher can use stacks repeatedly, but can also change text as easily as modifying an html textfile.

Process: From Theory to Prototype to Evaluation to Revision

The SHGs have evolved over time as I learned from practice about problems and opportunities. The first prototype, created using HyperCard, was designed to achieve advantages of random access to audio, graphic and video resources, especially different productions of the same scene (Advantages 1, 2 and 7 above). In Spring 1994, the prototype on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* established the basic structure for the SHGs (Lectures and Explorations, Cast graphic, Story summary, Glossary, References, Playtext access and Samples), used in English L315: Major Plays of Shakespeare. A year later (Spring 1995), I had HyperCard versions of 4 plays (*Taming of the Shrew, Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth*) available for use in class and as an adjunct for out-of-class student use. Bugs in scripting and limit to use on Macintoshes on campus were very restrictive, but student response in class and on questionnaires encouraged me to continue development to test the SHGs as an adjunct to a traditional section of the class and as the primary means of instruction in an on-line class. Before a full-scale test in Fall 1995, however, one student worked on the stacks for an independent study in the summer. (She had been taking a Shakespeare course by correspondence and had earned an A on her first paper, but she had not worked further for several months. Although this student earned a B in the hypertext course, she finished in eight weeks.)

The comparative sections of the course in Fall 1995 established that the on-line course was logistically possible and academically sound. Students had the opportunity to switch sections at the beginning of the semester, and transfers in both directions occurred, though mainly from the on-line section to the face-to-face section. I was the instructor for both classes: most educational studies show that the greatest variable between classes is the teacher. Besides, I was the only person prepared to deal with both the subject matter and the technology, even with the help of a student technician from my Spring 1994 class. In Fall 1995, the sophomore-level class (L220: Introduction to Shakespeare) used the same hypertext materials as earlier 300-level classes, but set the work in a different set of goals and requirements. The section of the course which met face-to-face employed the SHGs for classroom presentation and to provide makeup for missed classes. The other section used HyperCard hypertexts for seven plays, with students required to use the campus broadband network on-campus and only on a Macintosh platform, but with automatic sending of work to the instructor and automatic printout of student work. On-line students were also required to post at least once per play on a class listserv. On the hypertext materials, questions (some optional and some required) were interspersed in the Lecture and Exploration materials, usually with about eight required responses per play--a great deal of writing and a great deal of responding required from the instructor. (Students in the on-line section averaged four single-spaced pages of writing per play.)

Table 1 summarizes the mode of instructional delivery and course requirements for these sections--shown in boldface for paired sections-- (as well as earlier and later sections that used the SHGs in any way), along with a summary of completion rates, grades and student evaluations of the course. Since students in the two sections took the same exams, the only significant difference was the mode of instructional delivery. The grades and student evaluations in the two sections were comparable, suggesting that the on-line students had as academically sound a learning experience as the students in the traditional classroom. However, there were important problems, in my estimation, with both sections. In the face-to-face class, I felt that I was being pushed away from discussion or class activities and toward traditional lecturing because the make-up assignments covered certain lectures and explorations; that is, the supplementary material was organizing the

Crs/Sem	Logistics	Grading	Retention	Grades	Stdt Evals
L315 C042 Sp93	2x75 min. per wk for 14 wks.	10% paper1 15% ppr2 15% attendance 25% ppr3 10% rev.*Hamlet* 25% grp projt	(35-7Wx=28) 28-4W, 2F, 1Inc=21=25%non-com 75% success	6A 25% 12B 50% 3C 13% 2F 8% 1Inc 4%	3.4
L315 C136 Sp94	1x150min.p er wk for 14 wk	15% ppr1 20% ppr2 20% exam 20% fin projt 20%cps* 5% attdnce *class prep. sheets	(29-2Wx=27) 27-8F, =19=33%non-com [horrible weather] 67% success	4A 20% 12B 60% 3C 15% 8F 40%	4.6
L315 C207 Sp95	2x75 min. per wk for 14 wks.	15% ppr1 20% ppr2 20% exam 25% grp proj 15%cps(4of7) 5% attndnce	(34-2Wx=32) 32-1Inc=3% 97% success	9A 28% 17B 53% 5C 16% 1Inc 3%	4.6
L220 C304 F95f	**2x75 min. per wk for 14 wks.**	**30%ppr 35%exm 25%cps (4of7) 10%att**	**30-1w=29 = 3% non-com 97% success**	**9A 31% 15B 52% 5C 17%**	**4.6**
L220 C305 F95c	**6x75 min. total for 14 wks.**	**30%ppr 35%exm 25%response-ol (7plays) 10% listserv**	**(24-5WX =19) 2W of 19 = 11% non-com 89% success**	**5A 29% 10B 59% 2C 12%**	**4.4**
L220 C200 F96f	**2x75 min. per wk for 14 wks.**	**30%ppr 35%exm 20%resp (4of 7) 10%cps (5of7) 5%attdnce**	**(31 -2Wx=29) 6w,1Fe =24% non-compltn 76% success**	**10A 43% 5B 22% 4C 17% 3D 13% 1F 4%**	**4.6**
L220 C201 F96c	**11 f2f mtgs (75 min) req. in 14 wks.**	**20%ppr 35%exm 30%resp-ol (7 of 7plays) 10%listserv**	**(30-6WX, WZ =24) 5w, 1Fe= 25% non-com 75% success**	**7A 37% 9B 47% 2C 11% 1F 5%**	**4.8**
L315 C279 Sp97f	2x75 min. per wk for 14 wks.	10% exam1 30% 2 sh ppr 10% att&quiz 25% fin projt 25% fin exam	(44-5Wx=39) 1w, 3Fe=10% 90% success	11A 29% 21B 55% 4C 11% 1D 3% 3F 8%	4.2

Table 1: Logistics and Evaluation of Shakespeare courses using SHGs 1993-1997

main instructional activity. In the on-line class, students complained that they worked harder than in a traditional class, and as a teacher I certainly worked harder. Although I knew the minds of my on-line students better, I felt less satisfaction as a teacher, compared to the affect from a traditional class.

Transferring materials from HyperCard to the Web has made the instructional material more accessible to students and has given the opportunity to revise the way opportunities for response are included in the materials. In Fall 1996, I offered the two sections of the class again, but with some instructional material available in HyperCard and some as Web materials (with greater access). In Spring 1998, all materials were on the Web, with one or more questions available for each Lecture and Exploration. The administrative part of the class, separate from (though linked to) the SHGs and on a different server, included: posting of assignments and information as well as a class bulletin board (including separate forums for sub-groups), a grade book and a chat room. The syllabi of the two sections are now significantly different, with activities in the face-to-face class that require in-person group work, and with a group-paper in the on-line class that would be logistically difficult except on-line. Instead of 8-12 short responses, on-line students are asked to give two substantial responses and one group response for each play. The group paper cuts the grading to 20% for the third assignment, since there are five people in each group: one paper to grade per group instead of five individual responses.

I have been willing to cut the number of responses once it became clear to me that simply asking students to write a great deal was not necessarily improving their writing skills. The group project, which called for faith and good will in the first semester of use, is an attempt to include some metacognitive analysis with the writing. Each person in the group gets a slightly different part of the assignment to write about--due at the end of the first week of study (after the posting of the first individual assignment). Two days later the Writer for the group (a job that rotates throughout the group from play to play) posts a coherent draft incorporating the work of all group members; two days later the Editor posts revisions. Others in the group have the possibility of sending their comments via the Bulletin Board, by email, by meeting in a chat room or by meeting in person--before the Writer posts the final draft to the Main Bulletin Board for the class at the end of the second week of study on the play. In this way, students compare their work to that of others who are "on their side"; it is to their advantage to try to strengthen the work of the Writer. All students get the same grade for the response, except for group members who post too late for their work to be used (and they get a D).

It's clear to me now that there is no ideal form, though some are better than others. The SHGs are instructionally sound (according to an outside review I commissioned as part of project evaluation and available on request). Creation of the SHGs is labor intensive. Once the interface was established, it took me about 50 hours per play to write the instructional material and about 100 hours for a trained student assistant to create machine-readable resources; in addition there was debugging of the text. At this point I'm more interested in designing different course matrixes than in producing additional SHGs. The html code is easy to adapt or add to (although SHGs will now be available on CD-ROM to cut the time students are required to spend on-line). Perhaps the best use of the SHGs is as modules within a course structure that can be designed by many different teachers to serve different students. The next test therefore involves use of the materials by other teachers: are they willing to adopt the SHGs? are they able to adapt them into their own course goals, student needs and pedagogical philosophy?

Acknowledgments:

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